1:Dobrizhoffer M-5 (ca. 1760) 1822
S14 Abipon S14

excellent habit of body, and such sound health as most Europeans might envy. Many diseases which afflict and exhaust Europeans are not even known by name amongst them. Gout, dropsy, epilepsy, jaundice, stone, &c. are words foreign and monstrous to their ears. They expose their bare heads for whole days to the heat of the sun, and yet you never hear one of them complain of head-ache. You would swear they were devoid of feeling, or made of brass or marble; yet even these grow hot when acted on by the rays of the sun. After having been long parched with thirst in dry deserts, they drink large draughts of marshy, salt, muddy, stinking, bitter water, without injury. They greedily swallow quantities of hard, half-roasted beef, venison, tiger's and emu's flesh, and the eggs of the latter, without experiencing any consequent languor of the stomach, or difficulty of digestion. They often swim across vast rivers in cold rainy weather without contracting any ill affection of the bowels or bladder, which was often troublesome to the Europeans in swimming, and, if succeeded by strangury, dangerous. They ride seated on saddles made of hard leather during journeys of many weeks, and yet such long sitting does not injure the external skin even. They are unprovided with stirrups, and often use trotting horses, yet after many hours of uninterrupted

1:Dobrizhoffer M-5 (ca. 1760) 1822
814 Abipon 814

147 [192] riding you can perceive no signs of fatigue or exhaustion in any of them. Stretched on a cold [164] turf, should a sudden shower descend, they pass the night swimming in water, yet never know what the colic or the gout is. The Spaniards run the risk of both after being long drenched with rain water, which, when it touches the skin, affects the body most terribly in America, often producing syncope, and sometimes pustules and ulcers. I have frequently seen Spanish soldiers faint in the church from having been wetted with rain on their way thither. The Abi- 147 pones pass many days and nights amid constant [291] rain uninjured, because their feet are bare; for the moisture contracted from rain hurts the feet when they are wrapt up more than when they are uncovered; as, finding no vent when it exhales, it creeps inwards, penetrates the bones and nerves, and affects the rest of the body in a terrible manner. But I can give you further proof of the strength of the Abipones.

If a thorn of any plant happens to stick in their foot, and to break there, so that it cannot be dullad out by the finger, they will coolly cut the little piece of flesh, to which the thorn adheres, with a knife. When they go out to [192] act the part of spies, or to reconnoitre distant places, they sit with both feet upon the horse's back. They climb high trees, and sit quietly

1:Dobrizhoffer M-5 (ca. 1760) 1822
SI4 Abipon SI4

They climb high trees, And sit quietly
on their boughs, in order to plunder the hives 147 ●
concealed there, without any sense of danger [223 48 15]
or giddiness. After their removal to our colo- [753]
nies, being fatigued with handling the axe and
the plough, instruments to which they were
unaccustomed, and feeling their strength fail
them, their bodies bathed in sweat, and burn-
ing with heat, they exclaimed, *La yivichigui*
yauigra, now my blood is angry. For this they 757
have a ready remedy: they plunge a knife deep
into their leg, watch the blood spouting from
it for some time with pleased eyes, and at
length stop it by applying a clod to the wound,
saying with a cheerful voice that they are re-
covered, and feel perfectly well. They are 147
as lavish, and almost prodigal in shedding 304
their blood, for the purpose of obtaining glory,
as of procuring health; for in public drink-
ing parties they cruelly prick their breast,
arms and tongue with a bundle of thorns, or
with the sharp bones of a crocodile's back, with
much effusion of blood. They emulate one [703]
another in doing this, in order to obtain a re-
putation for bravery, and that these sponta-
neous wounds may render them less fearful of
shedding their blood in engagements with the
enemy, and may make their skin impenetrable
by covering it with scars. Boys of seven years [866]
old pierce their little arms in imitation of their

1:Dobrizhoffer M-5 (ca. 1760) 1822
514 Abipon 514

147 parents, and display plenty of wounds, indica-
304 tions of courage superior to their years, and
866 preludes of war, for which they are educated from earliest infancy.

758 Persons wasted to a skeleton, and with every symptom of fever and consumption, we have seen restored to health by daily eating and drinking the alfaroba. When seized with a violent disorder, or dangerously wounded, they recover by the use of this easily obtained remedy, or, like dogs, without any at all. I have often with horror beheld many of them wounded with various kinds of weapons, their side pierced, their bones and ribs broken, their breath drawn with difficulty, the blood streaming from their numerous wounds; themselves, in short, the breathing images of death. When I saw these very Abipones a few weeks afterwards, riding or drinking, in full health, I could attribute it to nothing but the strength of their constitutions; for it certainly could not be owing to their unskilful physicians and inefficacious me-
164 dicines. Every one knows that small-pox and
147 measles are almost the only, and by far the most calamitous pest by which America is exhausted. The Abipones take the infection like the other Indians, but seldom fall victims to the disease, though, whilst under its influence, they are less careful of themselves than the

1:Dobrizhoffer M-S (ca. 1760) 1822
SI4 Abipon SI4

other natives. Owing to the more healthy temperature of their blood and humours, it does not cause either so much, or such noxious matter in them as it does in others. Of the small-pox I shall discourse more fully hereafter. They live and enjoy their health many years after they have been wounded with leaden bullets without ever suffering them to be extracted: as a proof of their strength they often showed us a bullet sticking, without injury, in their arm or foot, and offered it us to handle. It is still more remarkable that a musket ball seldom proves fatal to the Abipones, unless it strike the heart or the head: their Cacique, the renowned Kaapetraikin, received a ball of this kind into his forehead without any dangerous consequences. Considering these things I often wondered why the savages dreaded fire-arms so much, since they very rarely proved fatal to them. But as children are afraid of ignes fatui, though harmless; in like manner the Indians fear the report more than the ball, which they so often find to miss of its aim, and prove formidable to the air alone. These instances will, if I mistake not, do something towards convincing Europeans of the strength of the Abipones. Neither shall I ever be a convert to the opinion that the Americans are possessed of a duller and less acute sense of

1:Dobrizhoffer M-5 (ca. 1760) 1822
SI4 Abipon SI4

147 corporal inconvenience. The Abipones are
151 highly sensible of the impressions of the elements, the injuries of weapons, and the pain arising from these causes, but are not so much overcome and exhausted by them as most others, either because they are blessed with a better temperature of blood and humours, and greater strength of limbs and muscles, or because the hardships they have been accustomed to from childhood, render them callous, or because their eager thirst after military fame impels them to deny that anything gives them pain, though they be ever so much affected by it.

145 I have already observed that they seldom grow bald, and not grey till at an advanced period of life. Even when arrived at extreme age they can hardly be said to have grown old, like certain plants which are always green and
000 vigorous. Cicero, in his treatise on Old Age, bestows great praise on Massinissa, king of Mauritania, who, at ninety years of age, *cùm ingressus iter pedibus sit, in equum omninò non ascendit: cùm equo, ex equo non descendit. Nullo imbre, nullo frigore adducitur, ut capite operto sit. Exequitur omnia regis officia et munera, &c.* The
145 Roman orator would find all the old Abipones
887 so many Massinissas, or even more vigorous than Massinissa. He would scarce believe his

1:Dobrizhoffer M-S (ca. 1760) 1822
SI4 Abipon SI4

CHAPTER VII.

WHY THE ABIPONES ARE SO VIGOROUS AND LONG-LIVED.

THE Abipones are indebted for their strength and longevity partly to their parents, partly to themselves. The vigour of youth, preserved by temperance, accompanies them during the whole of their lives, and is even transmitted to their children. The Abipones never indulge in licentious gratifications during youth, and though of a fiery temperament, debilitate their constitutions by no irregularities. They amuse themselves with conversation, mirth, and jesting, but always within the limits of modesty. By a sort of natural instinct peculiar to themselves, both boys and girls hold in abhorrence all means and opportunities of infringing the laws of decorum: you never see them talking together either publicly or privately; never idling in the street. The girls love to assist their mothers in domestic employments; the continual exercise of arms and horses engrosses the chief attention of the young men.

The Indians of other nations are often shorter, slenderer, and less robust. Many of them con-

1:Dobrizhoffer M-S (ca. 1760) 1822
514 Abipon 514

should attend to the maxim *ne quid nimis*, in dress as well as in other things. On the other hand too scanty clothing is assuredly prejudicial to health. Prudent persons vary their dress according to the state of the air, as seamen shift their sails. Even the Abipones of both sexes, and of every age, though satisfied at other times with a woollen garment, put on a kind of cloak, skilfully sewed, of otters' skins, when the cold south wind is blowing. This skin garment bears some sort of resemblance to the cloak which we priests wear to sing vespers in the church.

Galen, in his work on the preservation of the health, boldly and truly asserts that too great repose of body is highly prejudicial, but moderate and proper motion, on the other hand, of the utmost utility. This is consonant to the words of Celsus, Lib. I. c. 1. *Ignavia corpus hebetat, labor firmat; illa præmaturam senectam, iste longam adolescentiam reddit.* You cannot therefore be surprized that the Abipones are athletic like the Macrobii. They are in continual motion. Riding, hunting, and swimming are their daily employments. War, either against men or beasts, occasions them to take very long excursions. Their business is to swim across rivers, climb trees to gather honey, make spears, bows, and arrows, weave ropes of leather, dress

1:Dobrizhoffer M-5 (ca. 1760) 1822
514 Abipon 514

147
512
526
saddles, practise every thing, in short, fatiguing to the hands or feet. But if they indulge themselves with an intermission of these employments, they ride horseraces for a sword which is given to him who reaches the goal first. Another very common game amongst the Abipones is one which they play on foot. The instrument with which it is performed is a piece of wood about two hands long, rounded like a staff, thicker at the extremities and slenderer in the middle. This piece of wood they throw to the mark, with a great effort, in such a manner that it strikes the ground every now and then, and rebounds, like the stones which boys throw along the surface of a river. Fifty and often a hundred men stand in a row and throw this piece of wood by turns, and he who flings it the farthest and the straightest obtains the sword.

This game, which from boys they are accustomed to play at for hours together, amuses and fatigues them with wonderful benefit to their
[411] health. The same piece of wood which serves both as an instrument of peace and war, is made formidable use of by many of the savages to crush the bodies of their enemies and of wild
[181] beasts. The Abipones hate to lead the life of
147 a snail, idle and listless, and consequently do
512 not undergo a swift and miserable decay, like those who are stupefied with sloth, confined to

1:Dobrizhoffer M-5 (ca. 1760) 1822
SI4 Abipon SI4

their bed, table, or gaming-table, and seldom stir out into the street or country. The Abiponian women, though debarred from the sports and equestrian contests of the men, have scarce time to rest or breathe, so much are they occupied day and night with the management of their domestic affairs. Hence that masculine vigour of the females in producing almost gigantic offspring, hence their strength and longevity.

The food also to which the Abipones are accustomed, in my judgment contributes not a little to prolong their lives. What Tacitus says of the ancient Germans is applicable to them: *Cibi simplices, agrestia poma, recens fera, aut lac concretum, sine apparatu, sine blandimentis expellunt famem.* They feed, as chance directs, upon beef, or the flesh of wild animals, mostly roasted, but seldom boiled. If the plain afford them no wild beasts to hunt, the water will supply their hunger with various kinds of fish besides otters, ducks, capibaris, &c. From the air also they receive birds that are by no means to be despised, and from the woods divers fruits, to appease the cravings of appetite. Should all these be wanting, roots concealed beneath the ground or the water are converted into food. Necessity alone will induce them to taste fishes, though excellent. Tigers' flesh, spite of its vile odour, is in such esteem amongst them that if

[A = Probably the JAGUAR is meant here --- ANALYST]

1:Dobrizhoffer M-S (ca. 1760) 1822
514 Abipon 514

physicians and philosophers. I have repeatedly affirmed that the Abipones are vigorous, and long-lived, yet who can call them studious of diet? They eat when, as much, and as often as they like. They have no fixed hours for dinner or for supper, but if food be at hand will dine as soon as they wake. Hungry at all hours they eat at all hours; and an appetite will never be wanting if they have wherewith to exercise it upon. You would think that the more they devour the sooner they are hungry. They are voracious, and, like the other Americans, cram themselves with flesh, but without injury to their health; for their stomachs, which will bear both a great quantity of food, and long abstinence from it, are weakened neither by gormandizing nor by extreme hunger. They undertake journies of many months unfurnished with any provision. A sufficiency of proper food is often not to be met with on the way, either from the want of an opportunity of hunting, or from the unintermitting haste with which the desire of surprizing, or necessity of flying the enemy obliges them to pursue their journey. Yet an empty belly and barking stomach never do them any harm, nor even prevent them from cheerfully conversing to still the sense of hunger. On such occasions you see them betray no sign of impatience, nor

1:Dobrizhoffer M-5 (ca. 1760) 1822
514 Abipon 514

complain of any indisposition of body. I do not pretend to deny that temperance in eating and drinking is the parent of longevity, and gluttony that of disease and premature death: knowing that many saintly hermits have prolonged their lives to an hundred years, spite of continual fasting, and that perhaps they would have attained a still greater age had they taken more nourishment. Yet I scarce wonder that these Christian heroes lived so long, upon poor and sparing diet, because they were always celibate, and remained fixed to one spot without ever experiencing great fatigue. Neither, on the other hand, does it surprize me that the Abipones should enjoy such singular longevity, united with so much voracity; for they, who are all married, weary themselves with running, hunting, swimming, riding, and military exercises, and consequently to recruit their strength, require, and easily digest a greater quantity of food: for their vigour would decay and their great bodies languish were they not frequently reinvigorated with plenty of victuals. The Abipones are daily obliged to assuage their thirst with river or marsh water, which is generally tepid or warm, very seldom cold, and not always quite fresh: might not this be a circumstance conducive to health? For physicians prefer river or rain

1:Dobrizhoffer M-5 (ca. 1760) 1822
SI4 Abipon SI4

unknown to the Abipones, and quite unnecessary to them. Boys and girls not unfrequently pilfered melons grown in our gardens, and chickens reared in our houses. but in them the theft was excusable; for they falsely imagined that these things were free to all, or might be taken not much against the will of the owner. Though I have enlarged on the native virtues of the Abipones more than it was my intention to do, I shall think nothing has been said till I have made a few observations relative to their endurance of labour. Who can describe the constant fatigues of war and hunting which they undergo? When they make an excursion against the enemy, they often spend two or three months in an arduous journey of above three hundred leagues through desert wilds. They swim across vast rivers, and long lakes more dangerous than rivers. They traverse plains of great extent, destitute both of wood and water. They sit for whole days on saddles scarce softer than wood, without having their feet supported by a stirrup. Their hands always bear the weight of a very long spear. They generally ride trotting horses, which miserably shake the rider's bones by their jerking pace. They go bareheaded amidst burning sun, profuse rain, clouds

1:Dobrizhoffer M-5 (ca. 1760) 1822
814 Abipon 814

of dust, and hurricanes of wind. They generally cover their bodies with woollen garments, which fit close to the skin; but if the extreme heat obliges them to throw these off as far as the middle, their breasts, shoulders, and arms are cruelly bitten and covered with blood by swarms of flies, gad-flies, gnats, and wasps. As they always set out upon their journeys unfurnished with provisions, they are obliged to be constantly on the look out for wild animals, which they may pursue, kill, and convert into a remedy for their hunger. As they have no cups they pass the night by the side of rivers or lakes, out of which they drink like dogs. But this opportunity of getting water is dearly purchased; for moist places are not only seminaries of gnats and serpents, but likewise the haunts of dangerous wild beasts, which threaten them with sleepless nights and peril of their lives. They sleep upon the hard ground, either starved with cold, or parched with heat, and if overtaken by a storm, often lie awake, soaking in water the whole night. When they perform the office of scouts, they frequently have to creep on their hands and feet over trackless woods, and through forests, to avoid discovery; passing days and nights without sleep or food. This also was the case when they were long pursued by the enemy, and forced to hasten their flight.

1:Dobrizhoffer M-5 (ca. 1760) 1822
514 Abipon 514

and forced to hasten their flight. All these things the Abipones do, and suffer without ever complaining, or uttering an expression of impatience, unlike Europeans, who, at the smallest inconvenience, get out of humour, grow angry, and since they cannot bend heaven to their will, call upon hell. What we denominate patience is nature with them. Their minds are habituated to inconvenience, and their bodies almost rendered insensible by long custom, even from childhood. While yet children they imitate their fathers in piercing their breasts and arms with sharp thorns, without any manifestation of pain. Hence it is, that when arrived at manhood, they bear their wounds without a groan, and would think the compassion of others derogatory to their fortitude. The most acute pain will deprive them of life before it will extort a sigh. The love of glory, acquired by the reputation of fortitude, renders them invincible, and commands them to be silent.

Most of the observations I have just been making apply both to men and women, although the latter possess virtues and vices peculiar to themselves. All the Americans have a natural propensity to sloth, but I gladly pronounce the Abiponian women entirely free from this foible. Every one must be astonished at their unwea-

1:Dobrizhoffer M-5 (ca. 1760) 1822
S14 Abipon S14

ried industry. They despatch the household business with which they are daily overwhelmed, with alacrity and cheerfulness. It is their task to make clothes for their husbands and children; to fetch eatable roots, and various fruits from the woods; to gather the alfaroba, grind it, and convert it into drink, and to get water and wood for the daily consumption of the family. A ridiculous custom is in use amongst the Abipones, of making the most aged woman in the horde provide water for all domestic purposes. Though the river may be close at hand, the water is always fetched in large pitchers on horseback, and the same method is observed in getting wood for fuel. You will never hear one of these women complain of fatigue, however many cares she may have to employ her mind. A noble Spaniard had a captive Abiponian woman in his service many years, and he assured me that she was more useful and valuable to him than three other servants, because she anticipated his orders, and did her business seasonably, accurately, and quickly. They justly claim the epithet of the *devout female sex*. No sooner do they hear the sound of the bell than they all fly to hear the Christian religion explained, and listen to the preacher with attentive ears. They highly approve the law of Christ, because by it no husband is allowed to put

1:Dobrizhoffer M-5 (ca. 1760) 1822
SI4 Abipon SI4

CHAPTER XXI.

OF THE DISEASES, PHYSICIANS, AND MEDICINES OF THE ABIPONES.

I HAVE long since described the Abipones to be stout, vigorous, and robust; and unless I am much deceived, have already proved in chapter the seventh, that the diseases, which in Europe fill houses with sick persons, and graves with dead bodies, are unknown here. Epilepsy, gout, lethargy, madness, jaundice, diseases in the joints, complaints in the kidneys, elephantiasis, iliac disorders, &c. are names strange and foreign to the Abipones. You scarce hear once in three years of any of them dying of a fever, pleurisy, or consumption. Sickness is more rare amongst them than an Aurora Borealis, or an eclipse with us. I never heard any of them complain of tooth-ache except an old woman, who soon stopped the pain with a few drops of vinegar. I do not wonder that the savages should be exempt from so common a complaint, as they are accustomed from childhood to chew tobacco leaves mixed with salt and the saliva of old women, and reduced into the form of an unguent. It is not improperly, therefore, that

1:Dobrizhoffer M-5 (ca. 1760) 1822
514 Abipon 514

CHAPTER XXXIII.

OF THE MILITARY DISPOSITIONS OF THE ABIPONES.

I AM at a loss in what colours to paint the military dispositions of the Abipones; no word corresponds to the idea which long acquaintance with these savages has impressed on my mind. That the Abipones are warlike, prompt, and active, none even of the Spaniards ever doubted, but I should hesitate to call them valiant and intrepid. Cicero himself distinguishes an active from a brave man, in these words, 2. Philipp. *Ut cognosceret te, si minus fortem, attamen strenuum.* It is my purpose to write the history not the panegyric of the Abipones: I must therefore be sincere, and declare my real opinion, whatever it be.

Military fame is the principal object of the ambition of the Abipones. Their whole souls are bent upon arms. They can manage a spear, bow, and every kind of weapon with great dexterity, and ride on horseback with peculiar swiftness. No people with greater fortitude endures the hardships of war, the inclemencies of the sky, want of food, and the fatigues of travelling. They fearlessly swim across rivers formidable to

1:Dobrizhoffer M-S (ca. 1760) 1822
SI4 Abipon SI4

181 sailors and ships. They look upon their wounds
703 without a groan, and with as much indifference
[147] as they would upon those of another person.
They are acquainted with all those arts which
every European soldier admires, but which so
very few practise. This alone is unknown to
181 the Abipones, to despise death, and gain glory
703 by encountering danger. They boast of martial
761 souls, but are too unwilling to resign their lives.
They are active, but can by no means be called
brave, for a brave man would remain unterrified
were the globe itself to fall in ruins, and would
choose either to conquer or die. The Abipones
always desire to conquer, but are never willing
to die. They will curse a victory obtained at
[737] the expense of one of their countrymen's lives.
They abhor triumphal hymns if mingled with
funeral lamentations, and would reject a victory
accompanied by the sighs of one mourning
widow or orphan.

721 Certainly no one can accuse the Abipones of
181 rashness in venturing their lives. Their chief
adorations are paid to the goddess Security, the
arbitress of their battles, without whose approving
sanction they will never risk an engagement.
They carefully avoid a contest of uncertain issue. They always threaten others,
always fear for themselves, and trust nothing
to chance. Before they undertake a warlike